



The Transformation of Women's Roles in Islamic Preaching through the Hermeneutics of Justice on the Conservative Tafseer of the Qur'an in Patriarchal Societies

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ARTICLE INFO

Riwayat Artikel:

Submitted May 17, 2025

Revised August 11, 2025

Published August 16, 2025

Keywords: Islamic Da'wah, Women, Gender Transformation, Patriarchy, Hermeneutics.

Kata Kunci: Dakwah Islam, Perempuan, Transformasi Gender, Patriarki, Hermeneutika

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the role of women in contemporary Islamic da'wah as a manifestation of gender role transformation within patriarchal social structures. The urgency of this inquiry stems from the persistent patriarchal bias in scriptural interpretation, which continues to constrain women's authority and participation in public preaching spaces. Employing a qualitative, library-based approach, the research applies a hermeneutical framework that situates religious texts within their historical, social, and gendered lived contexts. The findings indicate that although women's engagement in da'wah has expanded through diverse media and public platforms, structural barriers—including discrimination, subordination, marginalization, stereotypes, double burdens, and gender-based violence remain prevalent. The analysis reveals that literalist conservative interpretations tend to perpetuate exclusion, whereas a gender-justice hermeneutical approach reconstructs a more egalitarian understanding of Islam. Compared to prior studies, this research offers novelty by emphasizing the structural and ideological transformation of women's roles in da'wah. In conclusion, women's participation in contemporary Islamic da'wah represents a strategic repositioning, reinforced by contextual reinterpretation of religious texts, thereby expanding their legitimacy and contributions as agents of spiritual and social change.

Penelitian ini menganalisis peran perempuan dalam dakwah Islam kontemporer sebagai manifestasi transformasi peran gender di tengah struktur masyarakat patriarkal. Urgensi kajian ini berangkat dari kenyataan bahwa bias patriarki dalam penafsiran dalil agama masih membatasi otoritas dan partisipasi perempuan di ruang dakwah publik. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif berbasis studi pustaka, dengan analisis hermeneutika yang mempertimbangkan konteks historis, sosial, dan pengalaman perempuan sebagai subjek keislaman. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahwa meskipun keterlibatan perempuan dalam dakwah semakin meluas melalui berbagai media dan forum, hambatan struktural seperti diskriminasi, subordinasi, marginalisasi, stereotipe, beban ganda, dan kekerasan berbasis gender tetap mengemuka. Analisis memperlihatkan bahwa penafsiran konservatif yang literal cenderung mempertahankan eksklusi, sementara hermeneutika berkeadilan gender menawarkan rekonstruksi pemahaman agama yang lebih egaliter. Dibandingkan penelitian terdahulu, kebaruan kajian ini terletak pada penekanan aspek transformasi struktural dan ideologis peran perempuan dalam dakwah. Kesimpulannya, peran perempuan dalam dakwah Islam kontemporer merepresentasikan reposisi strategis yang diperkuat oleh reinterpretasi teks keagamaan secara kontekstual, sehingga memperluas legitimasi dan kontribusi perempuan sebagai agen perubahan spiritual dan sosial.

Introduction

The role of women in Islamic da'wah is a topic rich in social, theological, and cultural dynamics. This discourse reflects the complexity of the relationship between religious teachings, which are normative, and social realities that are often shaped by patriarchal cultural constructs. In the development of contemporary Islamic societies, women's involvement in da'wah can no longer be underestimated. The advancement of women's education, progress in information technology, and the growing awareness of gender equality have opened opportunities for women to serve as agents in conveying Islamic messages across various media and public spaces. (Faizah & Alkhalimi, 2023) Nevertheless, the path women take in the realm of da'wah is often not easy, as they continue to face conservative interpretations of religion and gender-biased social structures.

Patriarchal societies generally position men as the primary holders of authority, whether in the context of family, social relations, or religious affairs. Within this framework, women are often considered unfit or less capable of playing a significant role in conveying religious values to the wider community. (Palulungan et al., 2020) This view is reinforced by textual interpretations of several religious precepts that assert the superiority of men over women. One frequently cited verse is the word of God in the Quran: "بِمَا فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ" (because Allah has favored some of them over others.). Furthermore, there is a Hadith of Prophet Muhammad SAW: "لَنْ يَفْلَحَ قَوْمٌ وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ آمَنُوا بِمَا وَعَدَ اللَّهُ لَأَفْلَحَ قَوْمٌ وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ آمَنُوا بِمَا وَعَدَ اللَّهُ لَأَفْلَحَ قَوْمٌ" (a people will never prosper if they entrust their affairs to a woman), is often used as justification for limiting women's roles in the public sphere, including in preaching da'wah.

Some frequently cited narratives, such as... "لأن الرجال أفضل من النساء" (because men are superior to women), "والرجل خير من المرأة" (men are better than women), "ولهذا كانت النبوة مختصة بالرجال" (therefore, prophethood is exclusively reserved for men), serta "وكذلك الملك الأعظم" (and similarly, supreme authority) demonstrates how the construction of male superiority has become the foundation for justifying the neglect or limitation of women's roles in various sectors, including da'wah. These narratives, if not critically examined, will perpetuate the view that women are indeed naturally and spiritually in an inferior position compared to men.

Interpretations of these religious precepts are often carried out literally and outside the historical context or social conditions of the community at the time of revelation. In fact, Islam came to elevate the dignity and status of humanity as a whole, without gender discrimination. Upon closer examination, neither the Quran nor the Hadith of the Prophet prohibits women from playing an active role in socio-religious life. A concrete example can be seen in the contributions of Khadijah bint Khuwaylid, who not only provided financial and moral support to Prophet Muhammad's da'wah, but also served as a spiritual consultant and strategic partner in the spread of Islam. (Azizah & Muchtar, 2023) Similarly, Aisha bint Abu Bakr became a primary source of Hadith and a reference in various matters of Islamic law.

Nevertheless, women in patriarchal societies still frequently experience various forms of gender injustice, which significantly hinders their active participation in Islamic da'wah. (Pahlevi & Rahim, 2023) This injustice is not only visible, but also deeply rooted in social, cultural, and even in dominant religious understandings. The narrative stating that men are superior to women (لأن) (ولهذا كانت النبوة مختصة بالرجال) and that only men are worthy of being prophets (الرجال أفضل من النساء) is a concrete form of discrimination and subordination that directly impacts the restriction of women's opportunities. This understanding perpetuates marginalization, where women are encouraged to remain in the domestic sphere and kept away from religious decision-making centers.

Meanwhile, the negative labeling of women's intellectual and spiritual capacities becomes part of a stereotype that is continually reinforced by gender-insensitive interpretations. (Ete et al., 2023) Women are considered emotional, intellectually weak, and incapable of leading da'wah. On the other hand, they also face a double or even multiple burden: the demand to fulfill both domestic and public roles simultaneously without adequate structural support. Gender-based violence also often targets female da'wah practitioners, whether in the form of verbal attacks, social ostracism, psychological pressure, or sexual harassment in public spaces. (Retpitasari & Amaludin, 2023)

All these forms of injustice demonstrate that the struggle of women in carrying out da'wah not only touches on technical aspects such as access to public spaces and speaking opportunities, but also enters a much deeper realm: ideology and religious interpretation. Many sacred texts, both from the Quran and Hadith, have for centuries been interpreted within a patriarchal framework by male mufassir who lived in specific social and cultural contexts. These interpretations were then passed down from generation to generation and considered the single truth, without considering social dynamics, the development of knowledge, and the principles of universal justice that are also part of Islamic teachings.

Therefore, there is an urgent need to develop a gender-just hermeneutical approach, namely a method of interpretation that considers the historical context, social context, and lived experiences of women in understanding religious texts. This approach aims to highlight the dimensions of justice and equality in Islam that have been obscured by patriarchal biases. Thus, reinterpreting religious precepts that have been used to limit women's roles is not an attempt to distort Islamic teachings, but rather a strategic step to restore Islam's main messages as a religion that brings mercy, justice, and liberation to all humankind, regardless of gender.

Several previous studies share similarities with the research that the author will address, including the following.

First, the research reviewed by Rouf Tamim, Ais Isti'ana, and Suslina from UIN Raden Intan Lampung, entitled... "*Komunikasi Perempuan dalam Dakwah*" (Al Huwiyah Journal of Woman and Children Studies, Vol. 4, No. 1, 2024) (Tamim et al., 2024). This study uses a literature review method to examine the role of representation and leadership of women in da'wah through communication and transformational leadership approaches. The findings emphasize that an inclusive communication style, as well as leadership based on vision and empathy, can change public perceptions of women in da'wah. While this research focuses on women's da'wah communication strategies amidst patriarchal challenges, the research that the author will conduct will take a different perspective, namely on the analysis of gender role transformation and criticism of biased religious interpretations in patriarchal societies, thus offering a new contribution from an ideological and theological standpoint.

Second, the research reviewed by Luluk Fikri Zuhriyah, Eva Putriya Hasanah, and Rizka Qusnul Qotimah from UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya, entitled... "*Representation of Women's Role in Islam on Sermon Content*" dan diterbitkan dalam Proceedings of International Conference on Da'wa and Communication (ICONDAC), Vol. 4 No. 1, 2022, (Zuhriyah et al., 2022). This research examines the representation of women's roles in Islamic da'wah through critical discourse analysis of the lecture content of a national female da'wah practitioner, Oki Setiana Dewi (OSD), on her YouTube channel. This study uses Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approach and social conflict theory to dissect the meaning of lecture texts that predominantly depict women as domestic creatures who must submit to patriarchal norms, such as requiring spousal

permission to work and the assumption that women's primary role is to take care of the household. Their main findings show that the da'wah narrative delivered by OSD reproduces gender inequality through the literal justification of religious texts and is influenced by patriarchal social constructs. Compared to the research that the author will conduct, this research focuses more on the content of women's da'wah narratives from the perspective of discourse representation. Meanwhile, the research that the author will conduct will analyze the transformation of women's gender roles in da'wah in patriarchal societies, including the dynamics of women's involvement as active subjects in contemporary socio-religious change. Thus, the research gap lies in a more structural and transformational approach to women's roles in da'wah, rather than simply on the narrative shaped by individual da'wah practitioners.

Third, there is research reviewed by Suud Sarim Karimullah from Gümüşhane University, Türkiye, and Siti Rutbatul Aliyah from the Universitas Muhammadiyah Tasikmalaya, Indonesia, entitled... *Feminist Criticism of Traditional Understanding of Women's Roles in Islam* diterbitkan dalam *An-Nisa: Journal of Gender Studies*, Vol. 16, No. 2, Desember 2023, PSGA LP2M UIN KHAS Jember (Karimullah & Aliyah, 2023). This study uses a literature review method with a feminist criticism approach to dissect the patriarchal dominance in the traditional interpretation of women's roles in Islam. Through a review of classical and contemporary literature, this research reveals that the marginalization of women in social and religious spaces is the result of social construction and gender-biased interpretation, not the substance of Islamic teachings. The novelty of this research lies in its affirmation that feminist criticism actually enriches a more just and inclusive understanding of Islam towards women. As for the fundamental difference with the research that the author will conduct, it lies in the focus area. If the previous research emphasizes the aspects of discourse and religious interpretation in general, this research will specifically examine the transformation of gender roles in contemporary Islamic da'wah in the midst of a patriarchal society, with an emphasis on the forms of participation and struggles of women in public da'wah, as well as the social and religious responses they face.

Fourth, there is research reviewed by Dr. Naseem Akhter from Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Women University, Peshawar, Pakistan, and Kardina Engelina Siregar from STAI Imam Asy Syafii Pekanbaru, Indonesia, entitled... *Contemporary Challenges and the Role of Muslim Women in Developing Society*, diterbitkan oleh *International Journal of Islamic Studies & Culture* (Vol. 4, No. 2, April–Juni 2024, Pakistan) (Akhter & Siregar, 2024). This research examines the role of Muslim women in community development through a literature-based descriptive-qualitative approach. Its main focus is on the importance of education, economic participation, and socio-political leadership of women as pillars of strengthening Muslim communities. The analysis includes tracing the history of Muslim women's contributions since the time of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, depicting the contemporary challenges faced by women in the social field, and emphasizing the urgency of empowerment through education and gender-just policies. The main finding affirms that women have a central position in community development, but are still hampered by cultural discrimination and non-inclusive policies. The main difference with the research that the author will conduct lies in the emphasis of the study. If the previous research highlights women's contributions in general in the context of Muslim community development, the focus of the author's research is on the analysis of women's roles in contemporary Islamic da'wah, specifically as a form of gender role transformation in patriarchal societies. Thus, there is an

important research gap to deepen the understanding of the relationship between the role of women in da'wah and gender-biased socio-religious constructions.

Based on these four previous studies, it is evident that the topic of women's roles in Islamic da'wah has been extensively researched from various perspectives, ranging from communication and leadership approaches, analysis of women's da'wah discourse, feminist critiques of traditional interpretations, to women's contributions in Muslim community development. The common thread that can be drawn from all of these studies is the attention given to the dynamics of women's roles in the Islamic public sphere and the structural challenges faced within patriarchal social systems. Nevertheless, the author sees a research gap that has not been explored in depth: the analysis of the transformation of women's gender roles in contemporary Islamic da'wah in the midst of a patriarchal society, specifically in highlighting how women are not only objects of discourse study or symbols of social participation, but as active subjects who also challenge, reinterpret, and reshape da'wah spaces through resistance to gender-biased religious interpretations. Therefore, this research is expected to make a new contribution in the realm of da'wah and Islamic gender studies with a more ideological, theological, and structural approach.

Based on the review and the existing dynamics, this phenomenon raises a fundamental question: How can the role of women in contemporary Islamic da'wah be analyzed as a form of gender role transformation in a patriarchal society, and to what extent do interpretations of religious texts support or hinder the active participation of women in da'wah?

Through this discussion, it is hoped that clarity will be found that not only uncovers the root of the problem but also formulates solutions and strategies in realizing gender justice in Islamic da'wah, without neglecting the noble values of religious teachings. Further discussion will elaborate on the dynamics of women's roles, a hermeneutical approach to religious texts, and reflections on the role of women in contemporary Islamic da'wah.

Research Methodology

This research employs a qualitative approach using the library research method, focused on answering the research questions regarding the role of women in contemporary Islamic da'wah as a form of gender role transformation in a patriarchal society, and how interpretations of religious texts support or hinder women's participation. Data is obtained from various relevant references that align with the direction and objectives to be achieved in this research.

The analysis is conducted using a hermeneutical approach that emphasizes reinterpreting religious texts by considering historical, social contexts, and the experiences of women as subjects of Islam. Thus, this research is descriptive-analytical, which not only portrays the facts of gender inequality, but also offers new perspectives and interpretation strategies in developing an inclusive and gender-just Islamic da'wah.

Patriarchal Society and the Transformation of Women's Preaching in the Contemporary Era

A patriarchal society is a long-established social system that places men as the central authority in almost all dimensions of life, including religion. In this order, women are often reduced to roles within the domestic sphere and positioned as inferior in terms of spirituality, intellect, and leadership capacity. This is reflected in the resistance to women's involvement in religious public spaces, particularly da'wah. When women appear as da'wah practitioners, many consider it contrary to nature and religious norms, even though such views are more sourced from patriarchal

culture than Islamic teachings themselves. In fact, various arguments used to reject women's public roles, such as QS. An-Nisa: 34 or hadiths about women's leadership, are often interpreted literally without considering their historical and socio-political contexts.

On the other hand, the contemporary era presents new dynamics that challenge the dominance of these patriarchal structures. Social changes marked by increased access to higher education for women, advances in information technology, and growing awareness of gender equality have opened spaces for women to actively participate in the realm of da'wah. Women are no longer merely the objects of religious discourse, but appear as subjects who produce and disseminate Islamic knowledge through social media, podcasts, webinars, and official forums such as majelis taklim (religious study groups) and religious institutions. This phenomenon indicates a decentralization of religious authority, which was previously concentrated in male dominance, and marks the birth of new forms of women's spiritual leadership that are more egalitarian and contextual.

However, this transformation does not occur without obstacles. Women still face various structural challenges stemming from patriarchal culture, manifested in the form of resistance to women's presence in public spaces, limitations on roles in religious institutions, and negative labeling of their existence as da'wah practitioners. (Ete et al., 2023) In this context, resistance comes not only from conservative society, but also from da'wah institutional structures that have not fully accommodated the principle of gender equality. In some cases, women who are actively engaged in da'wah are even socially stigmatized as deviating from the nature of women. (Sulfa et al., 2023). In fact, women's involvement in da'wah is a response to increasingly complex social challenges, including issues of public morality, the degradation of spiritual values, and social justice issues. (Dalimunthe & Rizki, 2024). Women appear as da'wah practitioners who can provide an empathetic, communicative, and relevant approach to the daily problems of society. In some cases, the presence of women in da'wah actually provides a new color and approach that is more empathetic, inclusive, and relevant to the problems of the ummah (Muslim community). Their unique social experiences enable women to address issues that are often marginalized, such as domestic violence, child education, female poverty, and even identity issues. This makes women's voices an important asset in building a more humane and holistic Islamic narrative.

Therefore, it is important to review the paradigm of contemporary Islamic da'wah to be more aligned with the principle of gender justice contained in the teachings of Islam itself. Islam essentially places men and women as partners in goodness, as affirmed in QS. At-Taubah: 71.

وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتُ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ يَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَيُطِيعُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ أُولَئِكَ سَيَرْحَمُهُمُ اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ

The believing men and believing women are allies of one another. They enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and establish prayer and give zakah and obey Allah and His Messenger. Those - Allah will have mercy upon them. Indeed, Allah is Exalted in Might and Wise

This verse can serve as a foundation for formulating a da'wah strategy that not only opens up space for women's participation but also affirms their authority as equal spiritual and intellectual leaders. This means that the command to engage in da'wah and uphold Islamic values is not a monopoly of a particular gender, but is a collective responsibility of all believers. Furthermore, gender mainstreaming in da'wah should be part of a progressive religious reform effort based on maqasid al-shariah (the higher objectives of Islamic law). (Faizah & Alkhalimi, 2023).

Referring to this, a new paradigm in Islamic da'wah is needed that is more responsive to social changes and aligned with the values of gender justice. Da'wah is not just conveying a religious message, but also a means to transform society towards the ideals of Islam as rahmatan lil 'alamin (a mercy to all creation). Within this framework, gender mainstreaming should not be seen as a secular Western agenda, but rather as part of maqasid al-shariah, namely, efforts to maintain the welfare of the ummah through the protection of rights, dignity, and contributions of all individuals without discrimination. The recognition of women's religious authority must be built on the basis of competence, piety, and the intention for the good of the ummah, not solely based on tradition or gender-biased interpretations.

Ultimately, women's da'wah in the midst of a patriarchal society is an arena of struggle full of challenges and full of hope. On the one hand, there is resistance rooted in a dominating and conservative culture. On the other hand, there is a wave of change that opens up opportunities for wider and more meaningful involvement. Women have and will continue to play a strategic role in transforming the face of Islam to be more just, inclusive, and contextual. The future of Islamic da'wah lies in the ability of the ummah to recognize, embrace, and facilitate the contributions of women as agents of spiritual and social change in an ever-evolving society.

Gender Injustice and the Reality of Women's Preaching

Gender inequality in contemporary Islamic preaching reflects a social and cultural structure still grounded in patriarchal values, manifested through six indicators of gender inequality: discrimination, subordination, marginalization, stereotyping, double burdens, and violence. Discrimination against women is often seen in the form of prohibitions against their appearance in public spaces, restrictions on access to mainstream Islamic preaching media, and labeling women's preaching as illegitimate or non-Shari'a compliant. (Sawedi et al., 2022) This form of discrimination does not only occur directly, but also through religious regulations and institutional policies that do not support gender equality.

Subordination stems from the systemic assumption that women are intellectually and spiritually inferior to men. Women are often considered to lack the authority or legitimacy to formally convey religious teachings, and their roles are often limited to the domestic sphere or informal da'wah (Islamic outreach). Meanwhile, the marginalization of women is evident in their absence from strategic positions within the structures of da'wah and religious institutions. (Derana, 2016) Many Islamic missionary institutions do not provide proportional space for women to take part in the formulation of Islamic missionary policies, so that their aspirations and perspectives are not accommodated in a representative manner.

These three forms of injustice are interconnected and rooted in a patriarchal culture that constructs male superiority in all areas, including the production and distribution of religious knowledge. Therefore, uncovering and analyzing these indicators is a crucial first step in building a sound argument for formulating a more just, participatory, and transformative da'wah strategy. Da'wah that promotes equality must address the roots of these inequalities and create a da'wah space that is fully and dignifiedly open to women.

The negative stereotype attached to women as emotional, weak-minded, and irrational creatures has become one of the most effective ideological instruments in reducing their role in da'wah. (Mujiati, 2024) This view is not only perpetuated through social discourse but also through religious interpretations that are uncritical of historical contexts and the interpretive biases that

accompany them. These stereotypes have a direct impact on the exclusion of women from strategic spaces, including formal da'wah activities that are considered to require leadership and intellectual qualities that have been socially attributed to men.

In addition, women also face a double burden: the structural domestic obligations of taking care of the household, children, and family relations, while at the same time they play an active role in da'wah activities. This condition often creates psychological and physical pressure because they have to carry two roles that actually demand full time, energy, and concentration, without systemic support from the state, religious institutions, or the community. This inequality is exacerbated by the lack of a fair distribution of domestic roles at the family and community levels. (Hidayati, 2015)

On the other hand, gender-based violence remains a serious structural barrier for women da'wah practitioners. This violence is not limited to physical forms but also includes verbal attacks, online bullying, social exclusion, psychological pressure, and even sexual harassment, especially when they are in public spaces or become public figures in the field of da'wah. This reality shows that the da'wah space for women is not yet fully safe and gender-friendly.

Thus, the struggle of women in the field of da'wah cannot be seen merely as an effort to gain access to speak or stand on the pulpit. More than that, this is a struggle against a deeply rooted system of values and social structures that place women in a subordinate position. The changes needed are not just cosmetic or symbolic, but touch on aspects of systematic cultural, theological, and policy reconstruction so that da'wah truly becomes a fair, equal, and liberating field for all.

Production of Religious Knowledge and Patriarchal Dominance in Tafseer

The production of religious knowledge in Islamic history was heavily influenced by a patriarchal social and cultural context, so that interpretations of sacred texts often reflected gender bias. Classical exegetes were generally men, who in many cases brought male perspectives and experiences to understanding revelation. This influenced the interpretation of sacred texts, which often affirmed male superiority and female subordination. Classical exegetes such as At-Thabari, (Ath-Thabari, 2007) Al-Qurtubi (Al-Qurthubi, 2007), and Ibn Katsir (Katsir, 2005) tend to understand QS. An-Nisa: 34 as an absolute legitimization of male leadership and absolute female obedience. As a result, many interpretations of the Qur'an and hadith implicitly or explicitly affirm male dominance in social life, including in the field of da'wah.

الرِّجَالُ قَوَّامُونَ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ بِمَا فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ وَبِمَا أَنْفَقُوا مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ ۖ فَالصَّالِحَاتُ قَانِتَاتٌ حَافِظَاتٌ لِّلْغَيْبِ بِمَا حَفِظَ اللَّهُ ۗ وَالَّتِي تَخَافُونَ نُشُوزَهُنَّ فَعِظُوهُنَّ وَأَهْجُرُوهُنَّ ۖ فِي الْمَضَاجِعِ وَاضْرِبُوهُنَّ ۚ فَإِنِ اطَّعْتَكُمْ فَلَا تَبْغُوا عَلَيْهِنَّ سَبِيلًا ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيمًا كَبِيرًا

Men are in charge of women by [right of] what Allah has given one over the other and what they spend [for maintenance] from their wealth. So righteous women are devoutly obedient, guarding in [the husband's] absence what Allah would have them guard. But those [wives] from whom you fear arrogance - [first] advise them; [then if they persist], forsake them in bed; and [finally], strike them. But if they obey you [once more], seek no means against them. Indeed, Allah is ever Exalted and Grand. recognize women's full contributions to every aspect of religious life.

When verses like QS. An-Nisa: 34 above are read literally without regard to their socio-historical context, the result is the legitimization of male leadership and the exclusion of women from the public sphere, including from strategic roles in conveying the message of Islam.

Conversely, contemporary interpretations such as those developed by Amina Wadud attempt to deconstruct textual meanings and prioritize ethical, contextual, and maqashidi approaches. For

example, Amina Wadud in her interpretation of QS. An-Nisa: 34 emphasizes that “*qawwamun*” does not mean absolute authority, but rather a reciprocal moral and social responsibility. (Rusydia & Azami, 2021). This kind of interpretation opens up space for equality and participation of women in social and religious life.

This theory of Islamic feminism provides a critical framework for viewing male dominance in interpretation as not a normative teaching of Islam, but rather a socio-cultural construct disguised as religious legitimacy. Alternative interpretations are needed to revise the patriarchal legacy in religious texts to be more just and contextual.

Furthermore, the text of the hadith is like “*لن يفلح قوم ولوا أمرهم امرأة*” (*a people will never prosper if they entrust their affairs to a woman*) is often used indiscriminately to limit women’s leadership, even though the text has a very specific political context during the time of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). This kind of ahistorical reading gives rise to generalizations that corner women and close off the possibility for them to appear as leaders of the ummah or as da’wah practitioners. In fact, in Islamic history, many women held authoritative positions in Islamic sciences, such as Aisha bint Abu Bakr, Umm Salama, and Rabiha al-Adawiyah. They were not only references for knowledge, but also important figures in spreading Islamic values in a substantial way. (Ginting et al., 2024)

Criticism of patriarchal dominance in the interpretation of religious texts is not a form of rejection of revelation, but rather a scientific effort to distinguish between the text (nash) and interpretation (human understanding of the text).

By using a contextual approach and hermeneutical methodologies, contemporary thinkers such as Amina Wadud strive to present alternative interpretations that are more gender-just. (Ni’ami & Irfan, 2023) These tafseer uphold the principle that the basic values of Islam are justice, compassion, and equality. Therefore, women have the same rights and capacities to be actively involved in da’wah and religious leadership, not only because of the demands of the times, but because Islamic teachings do not limit these roles based on gender.

Within this framework, it is important to deconstruct the assumption that the dominant interpretation is the only absolute truth. The production of religious knowledge must be opened to women, both as objects and subjects. They not only need to be facilitated to become da’wah practitioners, but also empowered as interpreters, researchers, and producers of Islamic knowledge. In this way, Islamic da’wah not only expands women’s participation but also enriches the treasury of Islamic knowledge with a perspective that is more inclusive, humanist, and in accordance with the realities of the life of the ummah in the contemporary era.

Narrative of Women’s Inferiority and Its Impact on Da’wah

Concepts such as “*الرجال أفضل من النساء*” (men are better than women) and “*النبوة مختصة بالرجال*” (prophethood is specific to men) have long been used in religious discourse to justify male superiority over women. The use of these texts is often selective and out of their original historical and semantic context, resulting in social constructions that place women in subordinate and passive positions. (Maulida, 2021) In many religious traditions, including in Islamic da’wah, this view reinforces the narrative that women are unworthy or illegitimate to take on public and authoritative roles in conveying religious teachings.

In the realm of da’wah, the assumption that women violate their nature when appearing as da’wah practitioners not only comes from conservative circles but is also reinforced by gender-

biased institutional systems and religious interpretations. Women who speak on the pulpit or in public forums are often suspected of having violated their ideal role as housewives or domestic servants. (Aulia, 2017) This stigma makes it difficult for women to penetrate formal da'wah spaces that are still dominated by men, in terms of access, representation, and social legitimacy.

Furthermore, these narratives have become part of the education system and socialization of religious values from an early age. In many religious educational institutions, girls are taught to be obedient followers, not leaders or reformers in the religious field. This shows how the construction of female inferiority is systematically reproduced and lasts across generations, thus narrowing their space for actualization in religious life as a whole.

In fact, Islamic history records the involvement of women in da'wah and the development of Islamic knowledge since the early days. Figures such as Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her), Umm Salama, and Rabiah al-Adawiyah show that women have long played an active role in religious discourse, not only as followers but also as shapers of thought and disseminators of teachings. Their absence in mainstream narratives is due to a historiographical selection biased by patriarchy, not because of a lack of female contribution. (Amini, 2018)

If this narrative of inferiority continues to be maintained, it will not only harm women personally and socially but also harm the Muslim community collectively. The intellectual, spiritual, and leadership potential of women becomes buried by dogmas that are no longer relevant to the spirit of the times. In the context of contemporary da'wah, there needs to be a deconstruction of this dominant discourse so that the space for women's participation can be opened widely and fairly.

By dismantling these narratives, we pave the way for a reinterpretation of Islamic teachings that is more contextual and gender-just. Da'wah that actively includes women not only enriches perspectives but also strengthens the message of Islam as a *rahmatan lil 'alamin* (a mercy to all creation) religion. Therefore, the liberation of women from this construction of inferiority is an integral part of the transformative and inclusive mission of Islamic da'wah.

In the context of Islamic epistemology, this narrative of inferiority must be reviewed through a critical approach to authoritative sources. The presence of female figures such as Khadijah bint Khuwaylid, who became the Prophet's strategic partner, or Aisha bint Abu Bakr, who became a reference for Islamic knowledge, shows that women have historical legitimacy in da'wah and the transmission of knowledge. (Azizah & Muchtar, 2023) Therefore, claims of inferiority do not have a strong normative basis, but rather are inherited social constructs.

Reinterpretation and Hermeneutics of Justice as a Preaching Strategy

A da'wah strategy that is committed to gender justice does not simply demand the symbolic involvement of women, but rather requires an epistemological and methodological shift in understanding religious texts. Islamic da'wah must be able to dismantle the legacy of interpretations constructed in patriarchal cultural environments, which for centuries have excluded women from authoritative religious spaces. Therefore, the reinterpretation of religious arguments that have so far been used to legitimize the restriction of women's roles is a necessity, not a form of rebellion against sacred texts, but rather a manifestation of loyalty to the noble values of Islam such as justice (*al-'adl*), mercy (*rahmah*), and human dignity (*karamah insaniyah*). Islam as *rahmatan lil 'alamin* demands that its values be inclusive, transformative, and relevant to social changes, including in fighting for gender equality as part of the da'wah mission. (Huriani, 2021)

Within this framework, a hermeneutics of gender justice becomes a crucial methodological approach. This approach not only treats the text as a static linguistic entity but also recognizes that the meaning of the text is historical, contextual, and influenced by the social constructions in which the interpretation develops. Thus, a hermeneutics of justice seeks to revive the universal moral messages of the Qur'an that have been marginalized by the dominance of masculine interpretations. Amina Wadud, as a pioneer of the hermeneutics of gender justice in Islam, in her monumental work *Qur'an and Woman*, affirms that the text cannot be interpreted fairly without involving the concrete experiences of women as an integral part of the interpretation process. (Wadud, 1999). For her, the Qur'an is an inclusive text that provides the value of equality, but its meaning has been obscured by interpretations that are exclusive, androcentric, and hierarchical. Therefore, her hermeneutical approach seeks to conduct a participatory and intersubjective re-reading where women as full subjects have spiritual and intellectual authority in interpreting the text.

In this regard, Amina Wadud has established three principles in her hermeneutical framework: (1) the text, (2) the context of historical revelation, and (3) the context of the reader. (Zuhri, 2021). This framework aims to unite the linguistic meaning of the Qur'an with socio-historical realities and the actual experiences of women as subjects of interpretation. In practice, this approach corrects the legacy of interpretations that tend to be gender-biased and exclusively masculine.

Through this hermeneutics, Wadud asserts that gender inequality does not originate from the Qur'an itself, but rather from the dominant interpretive constructions that are dominated by the experiences and perspectives of men. (Thayyibi & Santosa, 2022) She positions the female reader not merely as a passive object, but as an active subject possessing epistemic and spiritual authority in interpreting the sacred text. This opens a corrective space to the classical tafsir (interpretation) tradition, which often restricts the role of women in the public and religious spheres, including in *da'wah*.

In this regard, Amina Wadud's approach becomes highly relevant, because contemporary Islamic *da'wah* infused with gender awareness demands a re-examination of the religious legitimacy that has so far limited women's participation. If conventional tafsir has been used to strengthen patriarchal structures, then Wadud's hermeneutical approach seeks to democratize access to the meaning of the text and affirm women's experiences as part of a legitimate interpretation. (Izzah, 2021)

The transformation of gender roles in *da'wah* is not just about the representation of women in public spaces, but also concerns the reconstruction of Islamic epistemology. When women appear as *da'iyah* (female preachers) or interpreters, they not only bring a new voice, but also bring interpretations that are more just, inclusive, and in accordance with the principle of *tawhid* (the oneness of God) which emphasizes the oneness of God and the equality of humanity. This shows that the interpretation of religious arguments can become a tool for empowerment, not oppression, depending on the methodology and the subject who interprets them.

Thus, the role of women in contemporary Islamic *da'wah* is a form of transformative hermeneutical praxis. It not only repositions women in the structure of *da'wah*, but also dismantles the old ways of thinking that make religion a tool of gender dominance. *Da'wah* built on a hermeneutical awareness of this kind can be a way out of the shackles of patriarchy towards a more just and inclusive Islamic praxis.

As for the context of *da'wah*, a hermeneutics of justice functions not only as an interpretive theory but as a strategy for social and theological transformation. The role of women in *da'wah* is

often reduced to being supplementary, not the main actors. This hermeneutical approach is present to reposition women as subjects of da'wah who have full legitimacy to convey, interpret, and reconstruct Islamic discourse actively. Reinterpreting verses that are gender-problematic, such as QS. An-Nisa: 34, as well as hadiths about female leadership, is important to build a fair and responsive theological foundation. (Rusydia & Azami, 2021). Da'wah is not just about conveying doctrine, but also about how Islamic values address structural injustices in society, including gender inequality. Therefore, da'wah based on a hermeneutics of justice will be more contextual, responsive to social changes, and able to strengthen the presence of Islam as a liberating and enlightening religion.

In its implementation, a da'wah strategy based on gender justice must be able to explore and disseminate contemporary interpretations that are more humane, just, and transformative. The confrontation between hierarchical classical interpretations and more equitable contemporary interpretations needs to be critically examined as part of the effort to deconstruct dominant narratives that limit women's space for movement. Reinterpretation of the patriarchal religious heritage needs to be carried out methodically, based on the principles of maqasid al-shariah (objectives of Islamic law), by prioritizing the protection of human dignity, religion, life, intellect, lineage, property, and including the values of tawhid (oneness of God), social justice, and basic individual rights. (Pertiwi & Herianingrum, 2024). With this approach, da'wah not only becomes a medium for transmitting teachings, but also becomes an arena of ideological struggle in reclaiming spiritual and social spaces that have been monopolized by patriarchal constructions.

A hermeneutics of justice in da'wah strategy is not just an academic discourse, but a strategic approach that aims to build collective awareness among the people through the values of justice, equality, and humanity. Da'wah based on this principle will broaden its reach, increase its credibility, and make Islam a system of values that is inclusive and friendly to all groups, without discrimination, including in terms of gender. In this context, women should not be seen solely as objects receiving teachings or as complements behind the scenes, but must be recognized as active subjects with equal spiritual, intellectual, and social legitimacy. The involvement of women in the process of interpreting Islamic teachings and conveying da'wah enriches perspectives, expands social influence, and strengthens the relevance of Islam amidst increasingly complex social dynamics. (Kholifah, 2024) Thus, a hermeneutics of justice serves as a bridge between text and reality, revelation and context, and also as a means to overhaul the unequal power relations in the religious sphere, towards the realization of a just, equal, and humane Islamic society.

Inclusive Da'wah and the Future of Women's Participation

Inclusive da'wah that accommodates the presence of women equally is not only a methodological innovation but also a paradigmatic transformation in the development of contemporary Islam. (Alfiyah & Ahlan, 2022) Inclusivity here refers to the full recognition of women's intellectual, spiritual, and social capacities as autonomous subjects of da'wah, not merely passive supporters of religious narratives dominated by men. This change represents an important shift in da'wah strategies toward a more comprehensive, participatory, and contextual approach that aligns with the realities of modern society.

In the context of globalization and the era of information openness, Islam is not only faced with internal challenges in the form of religious conservatism, but also with external pressures such as Islamophobia, secularism, and radicalism. In this situation, the voices of women become very

strategic because they are able to present Islamic narratives that are more humanistic, peaceful, and solution-oriented through a da'wah approach that is empathetic, communicative, and based on broad social experiences. (Mu'awanah, 2022) Women also have an advantage in reaching segments of society that have been marginalized, such as marginalized communities, female victims of violence, and young people who are thirsty for a spirituality that is relevant to the challenges of the times.

The active participation of women in da'wah reflects the progressive Islamic principles that are on the side of social justice. They become agents of transformation who bridge the gap between the normative values of Islam and the demands of just social change. (Sugitanata et al., 2024) Therefore, building inclusive da'wah is not enough just to provide symbolic space, but must also be followed by reconstruction of institutional policies, religious education curriculum, and reinterpretation of religious texts with a fair gender approach. Only in this way can da'wah function as an instrument of emancipation and empowerment in order to shape a more egalitarian Islamic civilization that is responsive to contemporary social realities.

Women's participation in da'wah not only contributes to expanding the scope of the Islamic message to various groups of people, but also serves as a representation of the true inclusiveness of Islam. (Kholifah, 2024) Women bring a distinctive perspective of social experience, which, when included in the context of da'wah, is able to expand the dimensions of empathy, diversity, and social sensitivity in conveying Islamic values. The involvement of women makes da'wah more relevant to the needs of an increasingly pluralistic community, especially in the context of urban and multicultural societies. (Adibah, 2020)

Moreover, recognition of the strategic role of women in da'wah has the potential to dismantle the hierarchical structures in religious institutions that have so far been more in favor of patriarchal interpretations. Thus, da'wah that involves women actively and equally not only enriches da'wah methodology, but also contributes to the democratization of religious knowledge. In a gender-just system, da'wah no longer becomes a tool for the reproduction of power of one gender over another, but becomes an instrument of social liberation that fights for substantive justice. (Farid, 2023)

Therefore, it is time for the formulation of da'wah strategies to move beyond rigid normative frameworks toward a more responsive approach to social change. Gender justice needs to be raised as a fundamental principle in every aspect of da'wah policy formulation, from the curriculum of religious education institutions, the distribution of scholarly authority, to the institutional structure of da'wah. Women must be involved not only as symbols of participation, but as thinkers, actors, and leaders in formulating future Islamic da'wah strategies.

Conclusion

Based on observations on the issues raised and findings from the analysis of this research, it can be concluded that the role of women in contemporary Islamic da'wah demonstrates a fundamental shift in the social structure of patriarchal society. Women no longer function merely as recipients of teachings, but have taken a position as active and critical producers of religious discourse. Through their involvement in public da'wah spaces, both in digital media, religious institutions, and grassroots communities, women have interrupted male dominance in the construction of religious authority. This phenomenon marks a transformation of gender roles, where women utilize their social experiences, intellectual skills, and spiritual sensitivity to convey Islamic values that are more empathetic, participatory, and contextual. In this context, da'wah becomes a

field of struggle that is not only religious, but also social and ideological, which renegotiates the position of women in the midst of oppressive cultural structures.

Meanwhile, the interpretation of religious arguments has proven to be a determining factor that can both support and hinder the active participation of women in da'wah. Conservative interpretations that are read literally and ahistorically tend to reproduce the subordination of women and reinforce their exclusion from the religious public sphere. However, a gender justice hermeneutics approach has opened up alternative ways of seeing that interpret sacred texts contextually and ethically, taking into account the existential experiences of women as part of an equal ummah (community). Through this approach, a number of verses and hadiths that have been used to restrain the role of women can be reinterpreted into a theological basis that supports their full and dignified involvement in da'wah. Thus, the transformation of women's roles in da'wah is not merely the result of social compromise, but is born from a re-reading of religious texts that is fairer, more reflective, and in line with Islamic values that place men and women as partners in spreading goodness.

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